



The Meanings and Practice of Education in Democratic Life:

The Preparation of Professional Educators at UIC Executive Summary of the Conceptual Framework

One of the most culturally diverse campuses in the United States, the University of Illinois at Chicago is a public research university that prepares educators to work successfully in urban communities. Graduates from UIC professional education programs - teachers, school administrators, school social workers, and school nurses - are committed, knowledgeable, and effective educators. UIC educators are committed to the democratic ideal of developing the full potential of all students. They develop their own professional knowledge through study and critical analysis. They demonstrate effective practices consistent with their professional knowledge and ideals.

UIC Educators are Committed.

UIC educators are committed to the democratic ideal of developing each student's full human potential. They dedicate themselves to the continuing development of their own abilities to educate all students in the face of social and educational inequalities rooted in race, class, language, gender, disability, and other social differences. They understand and value the cultural and linguistic wealth of each student's community; collaborate with other professionals and community members to support student success; and assess their own growth in achieving the highest goals of the profession.

UIC Educators are Knowledgeable.

Educators are knowledgeable about the content of their field, human growth and development, and the creation of rich learning environments. They understand as well how these elements intersect to support student learning. But knowledge alone is not sufficient. UIC educators also reflect critically on what they know, questioning common assumptions, taking into account competing perspectives, and remaining open to growth and change.

UIC Educators are Effective.

UIC educators are competent practitioners who demonstrate the complex skills of professionals in their fields. This competence is developed as candidates work collaboratively with more experienced mentors who help them reflect on and refine their practice in intensive,



school-based experiences. As candidates assume increasingly greater responsibility in these practical settings, they come to understand that they are learning a craft that can never be mastered. From these three elements (commitment, knowledge, and effectiveness) UIC derives the following disposition statements:

UIC Educators:

1. *Commit to the democratic ideal of developing all students' potential.*
 - Demonstrate dedication and personal investment in meeting students' needs.
2. *Seek remedies to educational inequalities, take appropriate action, and motivate students to do the same.*
 - Strive to meet the challenges of inequality brought about by race, social class, language, gender, sexual orientation, health, disability, and other social categories.
3. *Recognize and make use of the human and cultural resources of local communities.*
 - Demonstrate cultural awareness and competence.
4. *Create collaborative environments that foster mutual learning and growth.*
 - Interact positively and energetically with students, families, colleagues, and community members to support common goals.
5. *Critically reflect on all aspects of professional practice.*
 - Engage in self-assessment and pursues opportunities for further development as knowledgeable, skilled, and ethical professionals; accepts constructive criticism in a professional manner
6. *Continually seek and critically examine knowledge, understand and respect different and competing perspectives within and across knowledge domains, and question assumptions about what is known.*
 - Demonstrate the ability to understand, think critically, and exhibit open-mindedness about what is known.
7. *Respect and adapt to the complexities of educational practice.*
 - Demonstrate adaptability, flexibility, initiative, resourcefulness, and risk-taking.



8. *Display and model maturity* through the qualities of compassion, justice, empathy, integrity, responsibility, and engagement, and demonstrate the emotional capacity to engage in the varying demands of the educator's job.

- Meet responsibilities on time, resolve difficulties skillfully and fairly, remain positive, treat others with kindness and understanding, and show an eagerness for educational practice.

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